(d) the funds allocated to Gujarat during the last three years and likely to be released during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI): (a) to (d) The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), under the Ministry of Water Resources regularly monitors the ground water level of the country, including the State of Gujarat through a network of National Hydrograph Monitoring Stations. Analysis of data collected by the CGWB has indicated fall in the level of ground water in various parts of Gujarat, including those in North Gujarat, Kutch and Saurashtra.

Water being a State subject, action to augment the ground water resources is to be taken by the concerned State Government. However, a Central Sector Scheme on 'Study of Recharge to Ground Water' was implemented in the country during the IX Plan. Under this scheme, the CGWB had approved 3 projects for artificial recharge of ground water and roof top rain water harvesting in the State of Gujarat, at a cost of Rs. 20.05 lakh, in the last three years. The proposal to continue this central Sector Scheme for artificial recharge in the X Plan is at consultation stage. As such, the details of funds likely to be released to the State during the current financial year cannot be given at this stage.

Recommendations of Ashim Dasgupta Committee

*211. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a high powered Committee set up by Government under the Chairmanship of Ashim Dasgupta, Finance Minister of West Bengal has listed four core problems being faced by the States as a result of Central politics;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by Government on each of its recommendations ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) The Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers headed by Dr. Asim Kumar Dasgupta, Finance Minister, West Bengal have in their Memorandum, listed problems being faced by States. These, *inter-alia*, include (i) adverse impact on the finances of the State Governments of the pay revision in the wake of Vth Central Pay Commission recommendations, (ii) larger interest burden due to States having to pay higher interest rate on central loans, (iii) adverse impact of shortfall in Central devolution to State Governments in 2001-02 and (iv) impact of RBI implementing the Ways & Means and Overdraft limits.

A High Powered Committee was subsequently set up under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of Finance and Company Affairs to assess the fiscal situation of States. This Committee discussed all these issues and recommended certain measures. These in turn, were considered at a meeting of all State Finance Ministers under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of Finance and Company Affairs.

Subsequently, at a meeting of Chief Ministers under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister, the recommendations of the High Powered Group were placed to enable wider consultation to arrive at a consensual approach. The Government of India would be guided by the decisions taken in this meeting of the Chief Ministers.

Geethakrishnan Committee Report

*212. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the major recommendations of the Geethakrishnan Committee Report;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Committee had recommended for abolition of 42,000 posts in Government;

(c) if so, the number of posts abolished during the last three years, category-wise, department-wise and year-wise;

(d) the number of posts created/tenure extended during the same period, category-wise, department-wise and year-wise; and

(e) whether it is a fact that only lower category posts are targeted for abolition ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The Expenditure Reforms Commission has submitted in all 10 reports on rationalization of the functions, activities and structure covering 36 Ministries/Departments having a staff strength of about 8 lakhs and on four specific issues namely, Food subsidy, Fertilizer subsidy, autonomous institutions and optimizing staff strength. The recommendations of Expenditure Reforms Commmission are under various stages of implementation.

(b) to (e) The Commission identified about 42,000 posts for abolition. On further study, the Ministries agreed to the abolition of about 23,000 posts out of those identified by the Expenditure Reforms Commission. So far around 11,400 posts have been abolished. These consist of posts in all groups of Group As, B, C and D.

(d) the requisite information is not centrally maintained. The